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Looking for a connection?
Visit The Link on page 2

Have you laughed today?
Take the laughter challenge on page 4

Look into the Land Trust
A letter from the local organization on page 12

A curious fox kit takes a moment to look up towards the sky in Algonquin Highlands. /photo by Tammy Nash

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The Link; a home away from home with high speed internet

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

A common theme that floated to the surface a multitude of times during the COVID-19 pandemic, was the loss of community connections.

Many office buildings shut down; resulting in a siloed working experience. Many clicking and clacking at their keyboards from home, the distinction of work and life getting blurred at the office door.

And while some thrived with the evolution of pant suits to sweat pants as their go-to work outfit, many did not.

There was a loss of creativity, of energy, of collaborative efforts.

That's where The Link comes in.

The modern yet cozy space was opened up in October of 2023, and has spent the past few years finding their footing, and filling in any gaps in the community. And so far, the space has taken off. "There's a vibe that starts to happen when other people are around," said Elisha Barlow, the programs and operations coordinator for Haliburton County Development Corporation (HCDC), who manages the day-to-day operations of The Link.

The co-working space is on the bottom floor of HCDC's new building, located at 5152 County Road 21, on the edge of Haliburton Village.

The Link is an evolution of the original Incubator Hub, which was located on Mountain Street for many years. "The original idea was to incubate businesses," said Barlow, "but that sort of changed as we figured out there were different needs in the community."

It was students from Haliburton's School of Art + Design who had brainstormed the concept of a co-working space. "It's for the community," said Barlow, "there are still a lot of people with bad internet connections around here, and they need a professional space to work."

While Barlow recognizes that many individuals utilize local businesses as alternative working spaces away from home, The Link offers something a little different. "There's more of a professional vibe to the space," she said. "There is still coffee here, and it's free! But the space is designed to offer a professional work setting for anyone who may need one."

There are a few options for those seeking professional work spaces in The Link. The first is to use a desk in the shared space. Barlow noted that many sit at desks with headphones in and are able to keep to themselves, but there is also a new energy when a series of individuals are working alongside one another.

Another option is to rent a private office space. Currently, the Arts Council rents one space, with the others sitting vacant. Yet outside the private offices, there are a series of community resources, designed to be on-site to support local initiatives. These resources include HCDC, the Business Development Bank of Canada, Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce, and the County's tourism and economic development team. The building is designed to be a one-stop hub for all things community and business oriented for Haliburton County.

The third option is to rent the board room, or The Link in its entirety to host meetings, events, and community gatherings.

If you book into The Link, there are flexible hours, dates, and times that you can access the high speed internet. Coming and going can be done on your own schedule, with easy access through an app on your phone to enter and exit the building as you choose.

"Remote work is still huge," said Barlow, "but we are offering a lot of flexibility. You can take any desk you want, any day you want."

While there is a cost associated with rental, HCDC puts the funds received from the desk or office rental right back into community initiatives that they support. "So when you support us, you're actually directly supporting your community," said Barlow.

More information can be found about The Link on their website, at www.thelinkhaliburton.ca/about. For rental inquiries, you can also contact Barlow at 705-457-3555.

"We want this to be the place to just come into, the place people choose to work," said Barlow. "There's something about coming into a place just for those community connections."

Haliburton Forest Poker Run

With over 650 participants, Haliburton Forest's annual Poker Run raised over $20,000 for the Dysart fire department. The Grand Prize winner was Lacey Rankin, who won a snowmobile, which she plans on keeping, and returning to explore the trails around Haliburton Forest. /TIM YANO staff photographer

County Life

The following inserts are being distributed with County Life this week:

Foodland *

Minden Valumart *

Rexall *

Shoppers Drug Mart Haliburton *

Todd's Independent *

All inserts are to selected distribution areas.

For information on how your flyer can be inserted each week in County Life please contact Melissa Armstrong at **613-332-2002** or **melissa@haliburtonpress.com**

Nature in your backyard

Cute red squirrel by Tammy Nash

Double deer by Jill Moulton

When your flashlight goes missing

I guess every family has their stories and legends. One for my family is about my brother Jason. In the early years on our farm before there was a yard light, it could be very dark when you had to march from the house to the barn. And yes, we had flashlights, but in a household full of kids, they often were missing.

Jason worked out a strategy of taking a piece of straw, as he walked along the well-worn dark path, he focused on the piece of straw. That way he did not get overwhelmed or scared by the darkness, he could just focus on the straw and feel his next step on the well-worn path. We retell this story often and I have come to regard the strategy as a great one for life in general.

Out there in the dark there is a lot to see, take in, understand, worry over, and be overwhelmed by. However, on this path there is really only the next step for us, the next right thing within our corner of influence. We can vote, we can stay informed enough to offer our opinion and support in things that matter deeply.

We can make sure our neighbors and family feel safe. We can do well at our jobs and make a positive change in the place that we are. We don't need to figure out the whole continent or try to fix massive issues or conflicts. We just need to focus on the piece of straw, feel with our feet and our intellects where we are going, where our personal path leads and keep moving forward. It is easy to feel the weight of the dark, however, determining the next right thing for each of us, in the here and now with what we can do and change, will slowly, collectively make a huge difference to the larger environment. For now, just focus on whatever your straw is, family, faith, work, health, helping, and you will get there.

TERESA JORDAN
Community Living Contemplations

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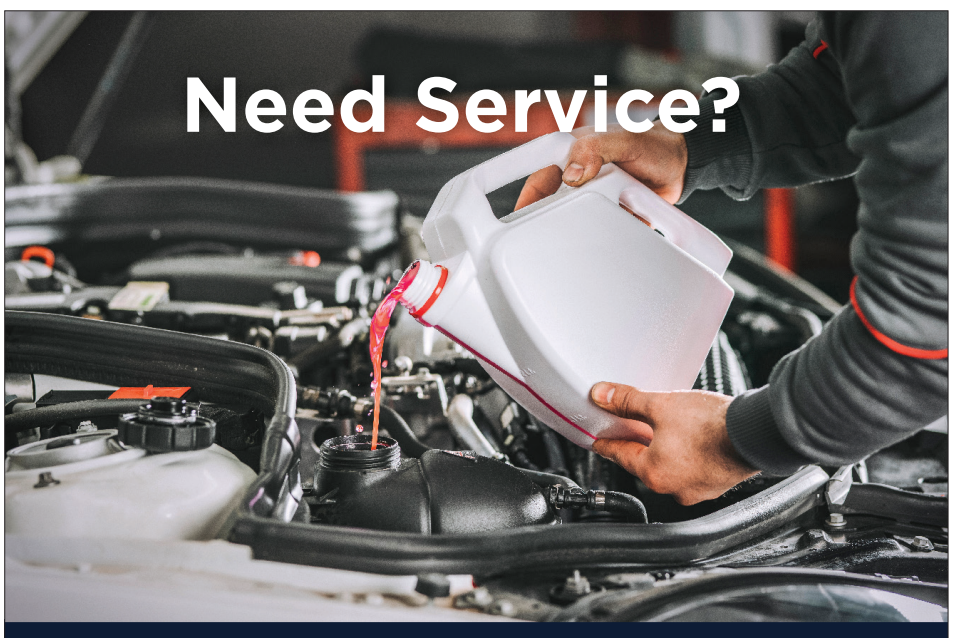

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Writing on the Senior Side

Laughter

GAIL STELTER
County Life Contributor

I was walking down the hallway when two little ones, probably grade one, came running up.

"Mrs. Stelter, Mrs. Stelter. He's being bad."

The "bad" child looked scared. I smiled and comforted him and said something like, "Oh, I'm sure he's not bad. What's the problem?

"He's hurt, and he won't go for ice."

I smothered my chuckle and reassured them both. You know going to the school office for ice is highly regarded amongst first graders.

"Teacher, she's being bad. She said a bad word. "

"Oh, what did she say?'

"I can't tell you. I'm not allowed to say bad words."

"Mmmm, yes, I know, but maybe just this once."

"She said the E-word."

I am baffled. What's the E-word?

"Wait here. I'll be right back."

I walked over to another teacher who was also on yard duty. "Do you know what the E-word is?

She replied, "No idea." We both started laughing.

I went back to the two little ones.

"I know you don't want to say it but I need to know what the E-word is.

"She said, 'idiot'."

Elementary Schools are wonderful places of laughter and learning. There were so many instances of sweet children and their stories. My first principalship found me in a school of almost one thousand kids and a dedicated, fun-loving staff. It was busy, stressful and also full of love and laughter.

With a staff of 65, it was not surprising that I had several first-year teachers every year. One year, I had eight of them. Curriculum Night in September was a big night for them and all of us. I went on the announcements towards the end of the evening, thanked the parents for attending, and reminded the teachers of a brief staff meeting that would start immediately afterwards. When the evening was over, and inevitably, some of those enthusiastic, sweet first-year teachers were still meeting with parents and having a difficult time bringing closure, I buzzed into their classrooms, politely reminding them that I was waiting for them to start the meeting. They would be practically running as they came into the staff room, notebook in hand, prepared for the meeting. Smiles and chuckles all around as the staff meeting was a wine and cheese social to thank them for all their work. It became a fun tradition, and the staff room burst with laughter, humorous stories and life-sharing.

Can you remember the last time you laughed so hard you couldn't catch your breath? Children laugh around 300 times daily, while adults barely laugh 15 to 20 times. So, Senior Side readers and friends, we need to consider going beyond the incidental laughter that happens in our day and start to embrace the lighter side of life. This is not always our first reaction to our world, but with some effort, we can win the "Laughter for Senior Health Game." It's a new game; I just made it up. I am going to make it through this never-ending winter and the messy, disturbing world by adding laughter to my daily to-do list. I am going to play and win the game, and so can you.

Before we start to play, I want you to know that this is not just any silly game. It is supported by research, and it is always good to have the facts before you join a game.

Ten health benefits of laughter for seniors

1. Laughter improves heart health. When you laugh, you improve the function of your blood vessels, which in turn increases your blood flow. Good blood flow can help protect you from a heart attack or other heart health issues.

2. Laughter reduces blood pressure. While you can't always control the factors that impact your blood pressure, you can find comfort in the fact that laughing can help bring it down.

3. Laughter releases endorphins. Endorphins are hormones that your brain releases. Laughter-released endorphins can reduce stress and help you manage physical pain.

4. Laughter boosts your immune system. When you experience genuine laughter and joy, your body takes the hint and produces more infection-fighting cells and antibodies.

5. Laughter can soothe tension. When you laugh, you will notice that the tension in your mind and body starts to fade or lessen dramatically. This can help you manage pain and get better sleep at night.

6. Laughter helps fight depression. While it's not always possible to identify the cause of depression, laughing can reduce the severity of feelings of depression by combating stress hormones in your body and improving self-esteem and your overall outlook.

7. Laughter improves memory. Trying to remember details can become more stressful as you age, which is why laughter's power to improve memory is so special. With laughter, stress hormones are reduced, which gives your brain time to repair itself.

8. Laughter promotes fitness. While laughing is not a substitute for regular exercise, it does engage many muscles in your body and gets your blood pumping. You might even feel more energetic after a fit of laughter strikes.

9. Laughter combats anxiety. Regular laughter can decrease feelings of anxiety and worry, giving you more stability and confidence to live with purpose and embrace life's joys.

10. Laughter inspires connection. Perhaps the most underestimated positive outcome of laughter is that it inspires connection. When you find a person or a group of people you can laugh with, you'll discover it's easier to keep those connections even if life throws you into unexpected circumstances.

Well, alrighty then, we are ready to play and excited to get all these laughter benefits. The rules are simple: To play the Laughter for Health Game, you simply do any two of the following every day and plan at least one more for a future date.

• Spend time with family and friends. There is always at least one family member or friend who is hilarious.

• Enjoy a funny film, television show, play, or podcast. Enjoy your favourite reruns. (Every time Peter watches Fraser, he laughs.)

• Attend a community event. Comedy nights are especially great, as are theatre shows that are full of humour. I laughed before the curtain was up at the Stratford presentation of *Spamalot*, and this year, we are going to see *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*. Don't forget that every year, right here in Haliburton at the Highlands Summer Festival, there is always one or more shows that bring on the giggles. Last summer, we rolled in our seats. Okay, maybe not rolled, but we laughed and laughed during the performance of *The Birds and the Bees*. Get your tickets now.

• Find and read a book that makes you laugh. I will never forget sitting in Chapters, in the days when they had comfortable chairs, and while I waited for Peter to choose a book, I picked up and started reading Stuart McClean's *Vinyl Cafe*. It was the Christmas turkey story. I started laughing out loud and couldn't stop. Or, how about Terry Fallis's *Best Laid Plans*?

• Find that silly or crazy childhood memory or happening and revisit it. Pause and have a cup of tea while you enjoy it all over again. We were in church on Christmas Eve, and I gave each of my grandchildren some money for the collection. As the collection comes to an end and the basket moves to the row behind us, a little but clear and loud voice says, "We paid. Can we go now?" We laughed, and everyone sitting close to us laughed. I do love the wisdom of little children.

Will playing my Laughter for Senior Health Game solve the problems of the world, of aging and making it to spring? No, absolutely not, but it might help you to feel better about it all. It is our choice and our responsibility to make our lives the best they can be. Laughter will make a positive difference, and when we combine it with efforts of infinite hope and love, we know we are on the right path,

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Ampersands

DEB REED
County Life Contributor

Ampersand is just the fancy name for those plus signs that look like &. As in R&B, or PB&J.

My move to Haliburton was an ampersand. An epilogue to my story. I'd only ever visited the village, but I wanted to live out the rest of my actual life in these green and pleasant highlands. I need simplicity nowadays, more stars & quiet to cap my retirement. I can wander lonely as a cloud, yet still get my words' worth while brain & mouth still (mostly) connect. And now I've found another warm & wordy place to release some of my ya-yas. Right here. In Haliburton.

I've been hanging out at a local art gallery on a Tuesday afternoon. The moody blues of winter presently feature there, on canvas, on walls. Artful pilgrims have also been gathering for coffee and to swap words. Personal stories. Existence, innocence, experience, intimations of immortality...we gab. Questions & answers.

Most of us attending are like ampersands. We seek the extra, the surprise, the excitement of linking a million same-or-new ideas. Our enquiring minds want to know. Gallery talk is never cheap. Tuesdays hold both safety & challenge. Inside, among the stunning paintings on exhibition - vocal in themselves - we re-examine all our stubborn old precepts.

It was in there recently that someone reminded us: the unexamined life is not worth living. I'd heard this theory before, but I couldn't remember the source. So I looked it up. And I instantly refreshed another concept to believe.

Ancient Greek philosopher Socrates made that statement at his own trial. He was reflecting on his personal ethics. His teaching style of question-answer through dialogue remains our modern model for problem-solving. Most of us value thoughtful feedback for decision-making.

What Socrates meant was that the quality of a human life hinges on examining, talking, growing. Self-reflection. With questions. For legacy. Plato, his student, and Aristotle, Plato's student, also helped establish early theories of Western philosophy.

It's so important to think. About all we do and everything we say. About why. Inside the box. Outside it. Independently or bonded to similar thinkers. And communicate out loud! It's a huge part of honouring the unique lifetime we're given. It's vital we leave it with pride behind our names. To have learned, evolved, belonged. To have spoken.

Along with the Coffee & Canvas Club at The Corner Gallery (Tuesdays at noon), there are other beautiful ampersands I've come to cherish in my eight years in Haliburton.

Every single day, sometimes twice, a mysterious and joyful backseat dog is driven along our road. Car window down, nose out, snow or sun, he barks ecstatically into the wind. I love this. My prankster granddaughter actually had her parents ferry her back and forth, car window down, before they finally parked. She too barked like crazy, mimicking that magic dog, knowing darn well I'd be peering out.

Loading one's precious lifetime with happy extras - and prioritizing them - are the simple ampersands to meaning. To an examined life worth living.

Cute deer by Tammy Nash

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Send your letters to the editor to emily@haliburtonpress.com. Letters must be signed and include a phone number.

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Wildlife and wonder

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

WE DON'T get a lot of feedback on our papers.

On occasion, I like to stir the pot as the editor of the *Haliburton Echo* and the *Minden Times*. I'll call out our politicians at every level of government, because that is the role of the media.

To ask questions, to hold accountable, to get people thinking.

But *County Life* is for something different. While it often showcases poems and words that carry some weight, it's largely about the arts, environment, and culture of our community.

We always have a page dedicated to nature in our backyard. This is the section reserved for our local photographers, who see this life through a camera lens and capture the wildlife and wonder of our world.

And while I don't often receive letters to the editor, unless the proverbial pot has been stirred, I almost always receive feedback on our nature photos.

"We get excited to see them every week."

"It's our favourite part of the paper."

"I always flip through to the nature page."

And while I have a steady stream of positive feedback trickling in about reading the nature pages, I also receive photos to be run on a weekly basis. And the experience-level ranges; from folks who have been shooting a camera for years, to a child who grabbed their mom's iPhone to snap a picture, I embrace every shot.

As I wade through our current political climate of woe and worry, I welcome the wildlife and the wonder.

I have recently realized that I am a politically charged person. I care deeply about what government officials should and could do for their constituents. I ask questions. I hold accountable. I like to get people thinking.

This snap election in Ontario has thrown me in the waters of political life in a way I have not experienced as a writer before.

And while it's thrilling and all-consuming, it simply cannot consistently be on the forefront.

We need space and time for wildlife and wonder.

And the fact that so many people take moments of their day to not only snap these pictures, but to send them along to me in an effort to share with others, that's my reminder that there is good in this world.

We are still captivated by the natural world. By the deer that rummages through our birdfeeders, the squirrel who pauses on our deck. We are mesmerized by the flash of red on a Cardinal, the jarring squawk of a Blue Jay.

Having these connections to nature is not just a hobby, it's a need. In an era where we are steadily swirling and buzzing in politics, to observe nature is to find our focus. To recognize that plants and animals are interconnected within our existence is to think beyond ourselves, and understand our humbling place in this busy and bustling world.

So thank you to everyone who sends these images in. Not only do I appreciate them, as they are a little slice into our reader's worlds, but they truly capture the natural beauty of our corner in the chaos.

And there is a time and a place for woe and worry.

But we must also make room for wildlife and wonder.

Top 10 things ice used to be used for

In modern times, we use ice for many things, from skating and food preservation to cold drinks. But back if you go back in history, you'll find people had different uses for ice that are now long forgotten or taken for granted.

Here are the top 10.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

1. To name an age.
2. To create products for Ye Olde Winter Outdoors Flea Market Diamond Emporium.
3. To create statues of politicians people wanted to forget by spring,
4. As a way to make shoes with blades on the bottom more practical.
5. As a thermostat in the cave. Eg. "Turn the fire up. The ice has hardly melted!"
6. As an anti-inflammatory for the injury it just helped create.
7. As a really bland popsicle flavour.
8. As the main technology in Gronk's Magic Hemorrhroid Shrinking Chair.
9. As the main technology in Cronk's Automatic Downhill Conveyance Machine.
10. To preserve Mastodons.

Borders

Bluster blowing along the border, the forest, quivering, on both sides,
charcoal clouds smudging winter Sky, as the pines brace for the storm, their branches flailing in the Wind,
only the trees hear the others' wailing, silent to human ears,
as they listen for footsteps instead, clomping through the Snow,
Breaths, heaving, after walking for days, seeking sanctuary on the other side,
Wind slicing through the pines, their roots, sleeping deep sleep beneath the frozen earth,
while the Uprooted slouch past them in the dead of Night, their lives depending on not being seen,
stick-figures camouflaging between the trees, the pines sheltering them, laden with Snow,
bearing the weight of their burden each winter, as hunched figures trudge through the Night,
carrying rucksacks on their backs or maybe nothing at all, no looking back as Night cracks open,
hatching dawn,
the forest of pines, smeared in grey light, exposing the figures slogging through the Snow,
wondering between Breaths, heavy as their burden, how much longer 'till they reach the other side,
seeking reprieve from the bluster blowing all around them, storm clouds swelling,
threatening to drown their future before it begins, the sanctuary seekers wishing
they could hibernate like the roots of winter trees 'till spring,
but onwards they tramp North through the Snow, in pairs or families or alone,
the family of pines, somehow, protecting them from prowling eyes and black boots clomping
along the border,
uncertain what they're searching for, but ordered to do so and they obey,
predators seeking prey, that dart between the trees,
without speaking words that might echo through the forest and reach the border,
their northern sanctuary, a distant dream, drawing nearer as dawn yawns above their heads,
and the pines, solid and rooted in their forest Home, encourage them by their quiet presence to keep going
'till they reach their new Home across the border, where their Breath can breathe the pureness of
northern Air,
where their Hearts and bodies are free to just Be, and love who they love,
without the bluster of words swirling around them, trying to disorder their world,
and build borders between human Hearts, when all the Heart wants is to feel what it feels,
unfettered and free,
the trees in the forest, quivering, on both sides, beneath the shelter of a borderless Sky.

Sylvie Kalenda

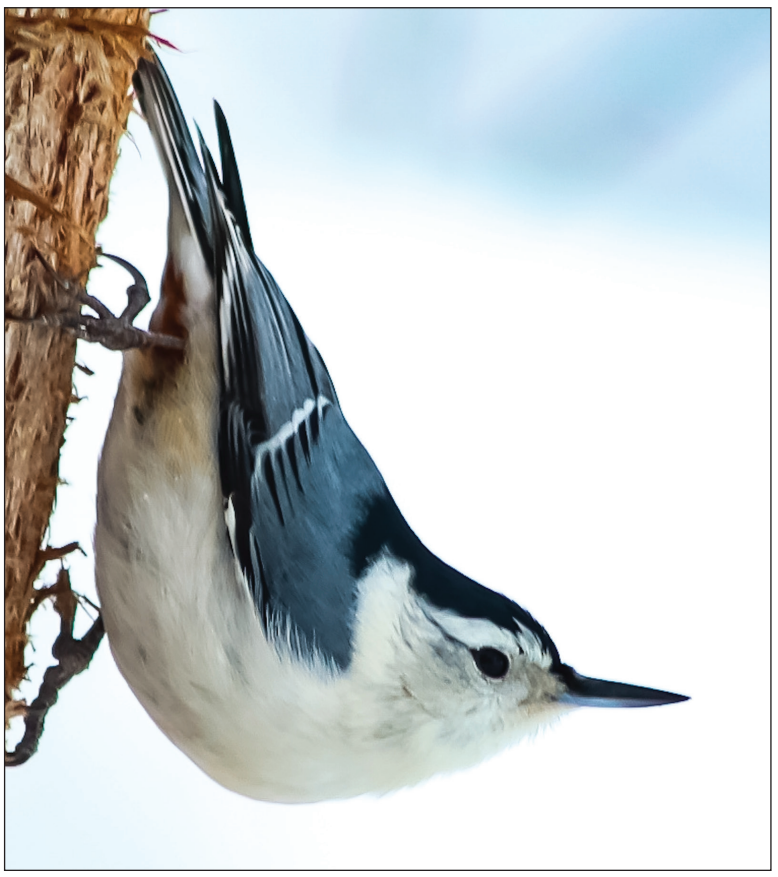
Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

Deer by Paul Jackson

Deer with a snack by Tina Jackson

Frosty squirrel by Jill Moulton



Nuthatch by Jill Moulton

Barred Owl by Tammy Nash

Blue Jay by Jill Moulton

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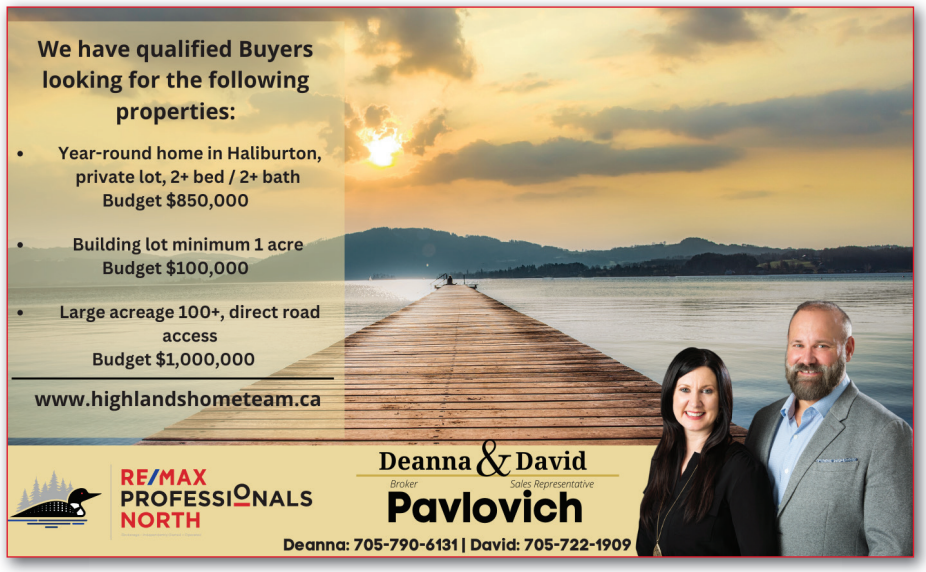
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- Being sold As-Is Where-Is

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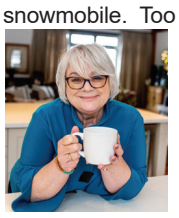

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Dominion Hotel; using Canada Beef to help food banks

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

In a time where consuming Canadian is of the utmost importance, Shawn Chamberlin of the Dominion Hotel has just the thing: Hell of a Burg.

The unique offering from the oldest establishment in the county is a part of February's Burger-It-Forward, a nation-wide initiative focused on raising money for food banks across Canada. The Dominion is one of 200 fellow restaurants across the nation, and has participated in the campaign for the past three years.

"I think we have some momentum on it now," said Chamberlin. "It was a little slow before, but people are starting to recognize it. But it always takes a little time to get things off the ground."

The program is put on by Canada Beef and the provincial cattle associations, and for every Hell of a Burg purchased during February, Canada Beef will donate the equivalent of one meal to Food Banks Canada, up to a maximum of 20,000 meals.

While the partnering organization is providing relief on a national scale, Chamberlin wants to give back at a local level, as well. "The Dominion Hotel will match this amount in a cash donation to our local food bank," said Chamberlin.

The custom Dominion offering is an eight ounce Canadian Beef patty topped with cheddar cheese, back bacon, jalapeños, pickles, red onion, tomato slices, lettuce and chipotle barbecue sauce, served on a toasted sesame seed bun. "We are always using Ontario beef," said Chamberlin. "We're as close to using all Canadian as you can possibly get." The special burger will be available for the month of February, at the Dominion Hotel in Minden. "It's a great way to bring people together, and have a little fun," said Chamberlin. "Plus, anything we can do for our community is a good thing. And this is a great cause."

The Dominion's contribution to the cross-Canada fundraiser for local food banks. /photo submitted

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/photo submitted

SIRCH and Airbnb join forces

Local Airbnb hosts gathered to assemble 40 warming kits. This joint initiative with SIRCH Community Services was initiated by Jacqueline Baptist, who is the moderator of a Facebook community of more than 370 local hosts in the Bancroft Madawaska Region, that also covers Haliburton County, to help address the issues faced by unhoused and precariously housed individuals and families in this county and North Hastings. Kits will be distributed by SIRCH to individuals and to partner organizations. Funding for the kits came from local Airbnb Hosts, and from SIRCH Community Services.

Submitted

A longstanding tradition

KATE BUTLER
County Life Contributor

"Legacy" is the newest show featured at the Rails End Gallery, and adds to the ongoing artistic creativity Haliburton County has to offer. /EMILY STONEHOUSE

Earlier this week, I was chatting with a visitor to the Haliburton Highlands Museum who had come to the area to enjoy some winter activities and take part in the Winter Edition of the Hike Haliburton Festival. Our conversation turned to the arts in our community and, as I mentioned some of the activities taking place, she was quite surprised and delighted to discover the variety of arts and culture groups in the Haliburton Highlands.

It likely comes as no surprise to those who live here that the Haliburton Highlands is a creative community. Beyond those aspects which we might cluster together under the umbrella of arts and culture, I think we would also agree that this is a community filled with creative thinkers. I feel as if this is an aspect of our community that we can see stretching far back into the area's history as well. In the collection of the Haliburton Highlands Museum, we have many items which were created by their original owners to respond to a particular need. Sometimes, it takes a little bit of creative thinking to realize what they were used for, because the design may differ from any we've seen before, or it might have been very particular in its purpose. It makes sense that this creativity would shine among families arriving in the area in the community's early days when shops in the area weren't plentiful, and the arrival of supplies could be delayed by any number of factors.

This creativity also extended to the venues in which the arts might appear. Town Halls doubled as performance halls, while parades marched through the streets of the communities for almost any occasion, boasting creative floats and costumes, as well as bands which lent a festive air to the proceedings. The Haliburton Citizens' Band was just one of many such groups. Its story began around the turn of the 20th century, and it provided opportunities over many decades for budding musicians of all ages to learn a new instrument and have an opportunity to perform.

Sometimes local performances were built on the skills and talents settlers had brought with them. In 1870, Charley Stewart, whose father worked for the Canadian Land and Emigration Company, noted that there were several local residents who had "distinguished themselves in England" as performers. He hoped that their talents might appear at the new performance space in Haliburton which his family proposed to build. At the time, they thought it would be a wing of their home which would be separated by folding doors. In the end, it ended up being a freestanding pavilion on the Stewart family's Newnham property – definitely an indicator of this community's longstanding arts and culture scene!

Today in the Highlands, there are countless opportunities to get involved in the arts and other creative endeavors and these opportunities are available year-round. It's also important to remember to cheer each other though, so make sure you also take time to also be an audience member. Perhaps you'll enjoy some music as part of the February Folk Fest, coordinated by Haliburton County Tourism or maybe you'll take in an art exhibition at a local gallery. (As I write this, "Legacy", the 2025 members' show, has just opened at the Rails End Gallery.) No matter how you choose to take part, just remember that you're part of a long-standing and thriving tradition of creativity in the Highlands!

Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Minden Ice Races Schedule 2025
When: Feb. 22-23, and Mar. 1-2
Where: Minden Fairgrounds
Spectator admission is free. Races begin at 9 a.m. on Saturdays and 11 a.m. on Sundays.
Experience adrenaline-packed racing on a frozen track!

Growing Food from Seed
When: March 4, 1 p.m.
Where: Minden Community Center,
55 Parkside St. Minden
Do you love gardening? Join the Minden & District Horticultural Society at the Minden Community Center, 55 Parkside St. Minden. Guest speaker Diana Westland will be discussing 'Growing Food from Seed ', followed by the monthly society meeting. New members welcome!

Youth Unlimited Gym Nights
When: Mar. 7 - Sports and Dodgeball 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Apr. 4 - Sports and 9 Square 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Highlands Secondary School
For Grades 6-12. For more info contact haliburton@youthunlimitedkaw.com.

Recurring events

Haliburton Legion Walking Group
When: Mondays at 9 to 10 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
A safe walking environment. Lead by an Occupational therapist.

Free Balanced Fitness and Active Social Senior Classes
When: Every second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 10 to 11 a.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All seniors are welcome. Group led by Registered Recreation Therapist

Bid Euchre
When: Wednesdays at 1 p.m.
Where: Haliburton Legion - Remembrance Hall
All welcome!

Seniors Chair Exercises
When: Thursdays at 1 p.m.
Where: St. George's Anglican Church, 617 Mountain Street
Please join us for safe and gentle exercises for seniors to help with balance, strength and flexibility. Free to join.

Cards/Euchre/Cribbage
When: Thursdays at 2:30 p.m.
Where: St. George's Church
617 Mountain Street
Lakeside Church Service
When: Sunday at 9 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.
Where: 9 Park Street, Haliburton.
Whoever you are, wherever you've been, you are welcome

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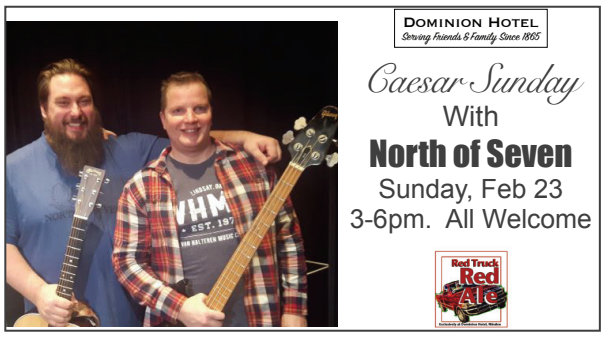

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An open letter from the Haliburton Highlands Land Trust

The Land Trust has been a topic of discussion on social media in regards to their Highlands Corridor, but the organization is seeking to set the record straight. /FILE

The Haliburton Highlands Land Trust (HHLT) is aware that mistaken information regarding our Highlands Corridor initiative is presently circulating across social media. While we welcome public conversation regarding all of our work, it is essential that those conversations be based on accurate facts. We are pleased to provide the necessary corrections here so that you, as a community member, can answer any questions that you or your friends and neighbours may have.

The large land area recognized as the Highlands Corridor comprises private property, Crown Land, and provincial parks. The misunderstanding on social media arises from the land trust advocating for a Conservation Reserve designation on certain segments of Crown Land. A Conservation Reserve restricts forestry, mining and aggregate industry use of the land, but does not impact recreational use. To be specific:

The three provincial parks falling within the Corridor would continue to be governed as they currently are by Ontario Parks.

The areas of Crown Land that are currently managed through Crown Land patents for logging and aggregate extraction would continue to be managed as they are at present, and would not fall under the Conservation Reserve designation. These industries are an important piece of our local economy that HHLT supports.

Only those areas of Crown Land comprised of intact forest and wetland with high ecological value and low industrial value are being advocated for the Conservation Reserve designation. These will be areas where the logging, mining and aggregate companies agree that there is little to no economic value to their industries.

Private property would not fall under the Conservation Reserve designation and would not be impacted. Private property owners would continue to be welcome to participate in the Land Trust's Partners in Conservation program should they wish to learn more about supporting ecosystem health on their own properties.

We choose to advocate for conservation reserves because trail use on motorized vehicles or by foot is allowed in a conservation reserve. Hunting, fishing, and trapping are also allowed. We recognize these heritage and outdoor activities are important in our community and for tourism, and they keep our economy vibrant. We support their ongoing use on Crown Land designated as a Conservation Reserve. Only logging, the development of new quarries, and mining would be prohibited in the designated sections.

With regard to the sources of information that have been cited in social media posts, it is important to clarify that Ontario Nature is a registered charity, not a regulating agency. While it has established regulations concerning public use of its own private properties, these regulations are not provincially mandated and would not apply in the Corridor. Similarly, Ontario Parks manages provincial parks to a much higher standard of protection than Conservation Reserves, so the public use guidelines outlined on the Ontario Parks website would not apply to the proposed Conservation Reserve land. Only provincial legislation directly concerning Conservation Reserves has any authority over these spaces. HHLT would have neither the power to set rules, nor the authority to manage or in any way control what happens in those areas.

Our ability to get out in nature -- be it on foot, on skis or ATV or dirt bike, to hunt or to fish -- is precisely what HHLT seeks to promote and protect through the establishment of Conservation Reserve spaces throughout the corridor. By designating these spaces as Conservation Reserves we are safeguarding the health of these pristine forests and wetlands and ensuring the public's enjoyment of them for generations to come.

Please visit www.haliburtonlandtrust.ca/2025/02/highlands-corridor-clarification/ for a full FAQ on HHLT's work in the Highlands Corridor.

Submitted

Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid euchre 1 p.m.
Cornhole 7 p.m. (upstairs)
Ladies darts 7:30 p.m. (downstairs)
Tuesday: Coffee and chat 9 to 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday: Coffee and chat 9 to 10:30 a.m. Mixed darts 7:30 p.m. Canteen opens at 6 p.m.
Thursday: General meeting (3rd week) Members only 7:30 p.m.
Friday: Chair yoga 10 a.m. Bingo, doors open at 5 p.m. Supper special every week. Canteen opens at 4 p.m.
Saturday: Meat draw 5 p.m. Canteen opens at 3 p.m.
Sunday: Ladies Auxiliary meeting (members only) third Sunday every month at 2 p.m.
We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you.

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo starts at 7 p.m. First Wed of each month - $1000 jackpot, rest will be a $500 jackpot. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend.
Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome!
Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out:
705-286-4541. Schedules are subject to change without notice. Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Closed, Wednesday: 2 to 6 p.m., Thursday: 7 to 10 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 9 p.m.
Mondays - Feb. 24 - Darts $5/player - 7 p.m.
Wednesdays - Feb. 26 - Darts $4/player, 2 p.m.
Thursdays - Feb. 20, 27 - Cornhole $5/player, 7 p.m.
Fridays - Feb. 21 -Fish n Chips, 5 to 8 p.m. $15
Feb. 28 Seniors 55+ Lunch, $17, Noon
Feb. 28 -Wings and Jam, $15/lb, 5 to 8 p.m.
Saturdays - Feb. 22 Meat Draw, 3 p.m
Feb. 22 - Ken McFarlane Ice Fishing Derby. Weigh in is at 6 p.m.. Registration is $20

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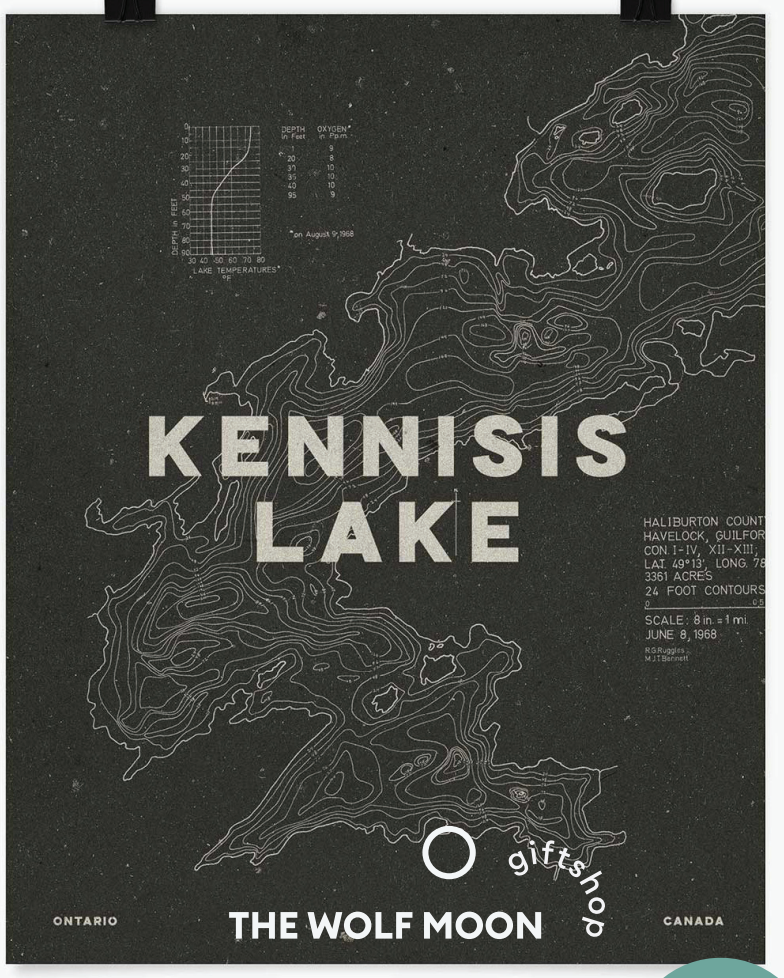

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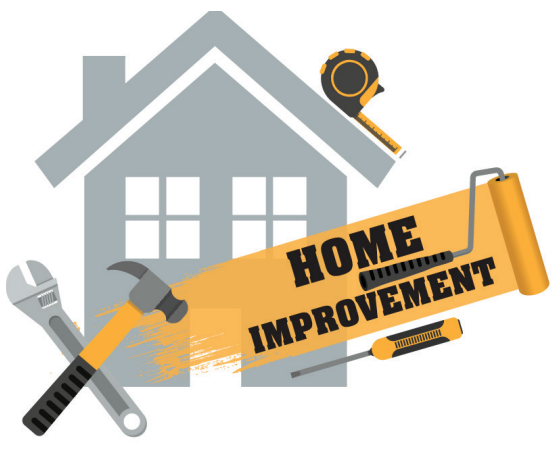

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A man having a seizure was lucky that help was only a CB radio call away

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Our Wilberforce and Harcourt correspondents know the influence two men can have

100 YEARS A LADIES' MAN
Collin Rowbotham has kept all his charm during the past century

THE ECHO
HALIBURTON COUNTY

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DARREN LUM/Echo

Storm warning

In game 4 of the playoffs against Schomberg on Saturday night, the Midget A Storm came on strong and never let off, building to a 6-2 victory – and the crown of the first playoff round. Captain Joel Cooper contributed a hat trick to the win. For more stories on hockey action, see page 8.

Girls making the mark for EQAO testing

SHERYL LOUCKS
Staff Reporter

Standardized test score results show girls are beating out the boys from Grade 3 to the Grade 10 Literacy test in everything - including math.

Test results from the Education Quality and Accountability Office from the last school year were recently presented to the Trillium Lakelands District School Board trustees. It is a mix of good and bad news.

A higher percentage of girls in Grades 3 and 6 are reaching the provincial standard in reading, writing and math than boys - a trend not only seen in this board but across the province. There were also 16 per cent more girls achieving the standard for Grade 10 literacy than boys.

Mike Burke, J. Douglas Hodgson Elementary School principal, says boys have traditionally lagged behind girls in areas like reading and writing while excelling in history, geography and science. Unfortunately for boys those are not the areas the Ministry of Education is interested in testing.

Burke says it is "gong to be quite a challenge" to improve boys' scores but he thinks better reading material and more computer-assisted programs may be key to seeing a change.

Principals will be meeting with board consultants this week to discuss strategies to improve scores not only for boys but for all students.

> *"It's going to be quite a challenge [to improve boys' scores]*
> **Principal MICHAEL BURKE**

Dale Robinson, superintendent of programs and assessment, said the board has many initiatives which it believes will help.

Schools have made significant strides in improving reading scores and the Grade 9 math scores. Schools have not, however, made similar gains with writing scores, which concerns Robinson. Barely half of the board's students are reaching the provincial writing standard in either grade, although, Robinson says, the board was significantly in the hole when it came to Grade 6 scores at the beginning of standardized testing. They "have come a long way," he says.

The biggest change is seen in the Grade 9 applied math scores. The number of students reaching the provincial standard has almost doubled since last year. Robinson credits better math programs in Grades 7 and 8 that helped the transition to high school, as well as new popular computer programs.

Robinson says there is still a need for improvement with only 43 per cent of students reaching the provincial standard compared to 75 per cent of academic Grade 9 math students - even though both percentages are higher than the provincial average scores.

Staff have identified schools that are struggling the hardest with standardized test scores and will be working with those schools to see how they can help.

HHHS campaign has $1.7-million to go

MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

Although the fundraising campaign for the county's healthcare expansion project has come a long way towards reaching its initial goal, ongoing expenses mean there's still a fair bit to go before the capital campaign can call it quits.

Dale Walker, executive director of the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation, is thrilled the community has raised more than $5-million to pay its share of the expansion projects in Haliburton and Minden.

But she's also aware that the outstanding loan is $1,675,000.

"It's a lot of money," she says.

See **Foundation** *page 13*

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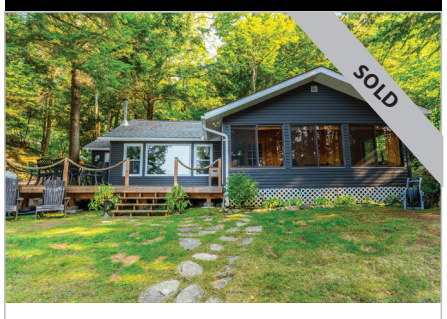

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